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INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
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RHEFDHP/DIA DHP-1 WASHINGTON DC  
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SUBJECT: BADR LEADER EXPRESSES SECURITY CONCERNS IN BASRAH

CLASSIFIED BY: Louis L. Bono, Director, Regional Embassy Office  
- Basrah, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Former Basrah Governor and Provincial Council (PC) member Hasan al-Rashid (Badr) told REO Director October 4 that Basrah's security has worsened. Unfortunately, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have done little to respond, and he accused Security Chief Lieutenant General Mohan Hafith Fahad of caving into Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) threats. Force would be required to restore order to Basrah. He also noted Badr's security concerns as a result of JAM's August attacks on Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) offices and the recent assassinations of Badr governors in Qadisiyah and Muthanna, which he attributed to JAM elements. Despite Badr's historical ties with Iran, al-Rashid believes Tehran is supporting JAM cells, even if the targets were ISCI/Badr. ISCI leader Abd al Aziz al-Hakim has urged the Iranians to stop supporting JAM. JAM needs to become a political or social organization, and Badr was working with nationalist JAM groups to legitimize themselves. End Summary.

12. (C) Hasan al-Rashid said that Basrah's security had taken a turn for the worse recently. There were more than 120 killings in September, including some prominent religious clerics. Spectacular-type attacks, like the bombings of Sunni mosques and a VBIED attack on a police station, were previously unimaginable. Following a recent mosque bombing, the relatives of the victims were kidnapped by JAM when they went to the hospital for visits. Al-Rashid was personally aware of over 20 threats to Badr affiliates, mostly Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani representatives.

13. (C) The response of the ISF, in his estimation, was lacking. He explained that LTG Mohan arrested three JAM members for the mosque bombing and initially refused to release them until JAM attacked his headquarters. When the ISF captured a JAM vehicle filled with mortar rounds, Mohan sent the find to Baghdad. Two days later, JAM demanded the rounds be replaced and Mohan reportedly complied. Al-Rashid opined that the use of force, preferably by the police, would be required to restore order in Basrah. Though not a perfect solution, it was necessary in every other major province to gain control.

14. (C) He also said that Badr feels vulnerable after the August confrontations between JAM and Badr in Karbala. JAM's attacks on ISCI offices throughout the country resulted in several Badr deaths and increased tensions. ISCI/Badr blamed the GOI for ignoring or not investigating JAM's attacks, and not providing

protection to ISCI offices. He suggested that Iran was behind the JAM assassinations of the Badr governors in Qadisiyah and Muthanna. When asked why Iran would support such attacks given Iran's historical ties to Badr, al-Rashid told us that Iran has its own interests in Iraq and will do anything to achieve them. The attacks against the governors, according to Badr, were planned in Najaf and attributed to JAM Special Groups led by Ahmed al-Shaibani.

¶5. (C) Al-Rashid said various JAM factions are being supported by Iran and Saudi Arabia. He said he recently met with ISCI Chairman Abd al Aziz al-Hakim in Iran, where they urged Iranian officials to end their support for JAM. According to al-Rashid, JAM was divided into three groups: the largest group follows Muqtada al-Sadr and includes the Special Groups; those funded by the Saudis; and the "Secret Army" supported by Iran. The best thing for Iraq's stability would be for JAM to become a political or civil society group. Badr, he said, could act as an intermediary encouraging moderate JAM groups one by one towards that end. He added that some JAM cells from the Sadr group had already contacted Badr for assistance in this process.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: This is the most animated we have seen al-Rashid, who is normally a very cool-headed interlocutor. Badr and al-Rashid have traditionally relied on Iranian support to maintain their powerbase, and it could be that this support is waning in favor of JAM. This, coupled with the recent court decision in favor of his arch-rival Governor Wa'eli (cable to follow) could be causing him to probe the possibility of stronger relations with the U.S. End Comment.

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